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Via ECFS
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

Please continue to support broadband competition by denying the petition filed on behalf of the largest U. S. carriers to dismantle key components of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

The petition claims that there will be no significant effect on competition in the residential telecommunications market because there is virtually no UNE-based competition in that marketplace. This is not the case. There are thousands, or perhaps millions, of telecommunications customers of relatively young startup companies that are still at least partially dependent on UNE connections even though they are in the process of establishing their own fiber optic networks.

I am one of those customers. I was a customer of AT&T for many years for telephone and internet service. My rates were increased frequently and often without prior notice during the years I was with AT&T. I had to stop my long distance landline service to be able to afford to pay the bills. Their customer service was terrible. When I needed to contact them by phone I usually had to wait for 1 or 2 hours before speaking to a representative and then get someone that cannot help me because they don't know the answer. When I needed service at home it was often incompetent. I once had a service man who replaced all of my inside wiring, for which I was billed, when it turned out that the problem was with the connection between the telephone pole and the house.

On another occasion the wire from the pole to the house detached from the house and laid on the back lawn for about two weeks before a service man came out to fix it.

I desperately wanted to switch to another landline carrier, but I discovered that AT&T was my only choice among the major companies in my neighborhood. I finally found Sonic on the internet some years ago, and switched to them for telephone and internet. I have had wonderful service from them: they have never raised my rates. And long distance landline service is provided at no extra charge. I can reach their representatives quickly when I have a question, and receive courteous service and accurate information. During the time I have been with Sonic they have been establishing their own fiber optics network at what I feel sure is great expense while still maintaining the same billing rate as when I started with them. If the petition of the big companies is granted, smaller companies, that still depend on UNE, will either have to halt the impressive

progress they have made, raise their rates or go out of business. Please don't let this happen. If you do, I may end up with no internet or landline service along with many other residential users.

Marjorie Bates